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For more information,  
contact me for copies of  
2006 Laws Affecting...

Seniors  
Education  
Business  
Children  
Major Acts

## Tax Savings for You

### Energy Weatherization

We extended the "sales tax holiday" from June 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 for residential weatherization, energy efficient products and heating equipment. The exemption is on insulation, programmable thermostats, water heater blankets, window film, window and door weather strips, caulking, water heaters, gas furnaces, windows that meet federal Energy Star standards, and oil furnaces that are at least 85% efficient. Now is the time to think about energy home improvement projects! For more information about the program, call **1-800-382-9463** or [www.ct.gov/drs.cwp](http://www.ct.gov/drs.cwp).

### Mark Your Calendar Now

This year's **sales tax-free week** for clothing and footwear costing less than \$300 per item takes place **August 20<sup>th</sup> to August 26<sup>th</sup>**. Just in time for back-to-school shopping!

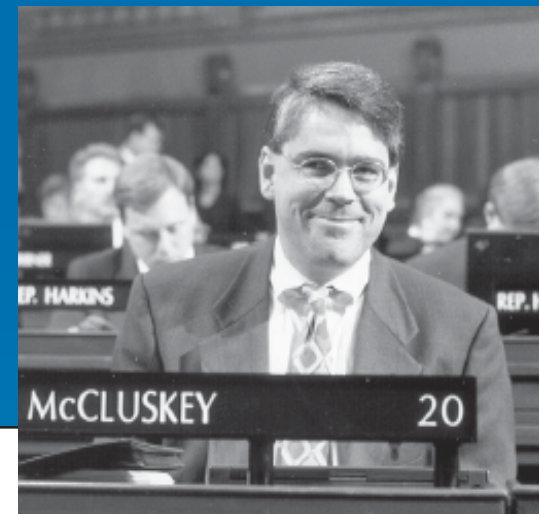


### Saving For College

It is difficult to save for college education. Legislation I supported allows taxpayers to deduct contributions into the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), the state-sponsored college savings plan, from their adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes. Deductions begin with the 2006 income year. Joint filers may deduct \$10,000 and single filers \$5,000 per year. For information on the CHET program, call **1-888-799-CHET** or [www.aboutchet.com](http://www.aboutchet.com).

# State Representative David McCluskey

## 2006 Legislative Report



Dear Neighbors;

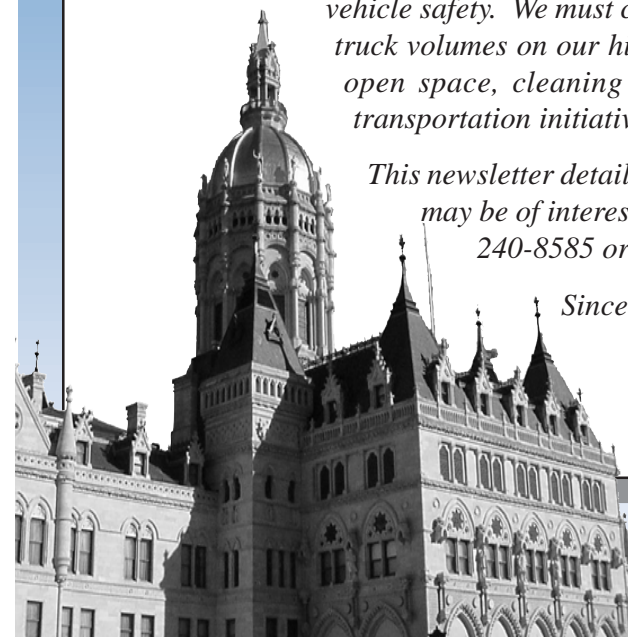
Since my 2005 end of session newsletter, there is much positive news to report to you. First of all, the state budget is in surplus. We have put aside a significant amount of money in our rainy day fund - a record balance of nearly 1 billion dollars; we have fully-funded the teachers pension fund for two years – something that has not occurred for a long time.

Secondly, Connecticut is now the first state in the nation to pass comprehensive campaign reform by its legislature. As you may recall, I was on Governor Rell's working group on campaign finance reform which met over last summer and fall. I worked on a bi-partisan, bi-cameral basis to forge the draft of the final legislation. I continued my work after the group issued its report to ensure we had a special session on Campaign Finance Reform and to get a bill that a majority of both chambers could vote for and that the Governor would sign. It's not perfect. In fact, we made some revisions in the waning moments of this session. However, it is being touted nationally as a model to reduce the influence of special interest dollars in the governmental process. Do we need to do more to make Connecticut's state government responsive to the people who created it? Absolutely. We must make the public hearing process and the legislature in general more user-friendly to state residents. I am committed to continuing my efforts in this area.

Finally, I am proud to say that this year, we continued the state's commitment to improving our transportation system (see the article on page 2). As co-chair of the Transportation Bonding Subcommittee, I worked with Governor Rell's Office and legislative leaders for a comprehensive approach, not just building more lanes of highway to solve our transportation problem. Working with the 1000 Friends of Connecticut, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, and others concerned with Smart Growth – linking transportation with land use and economic development – we passed a bill which requires Connecticut to work with New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island on a comprehensive regional approach to moving people and freight. We moved the Transportation Strategy Board into the Office of Policy and Management so that transportation would be linked with our state's economic development and land use initiatives. We must continue this effort to look at transportation broadly – not just building/expanding highways, roads and bridges for trucks and cars. We must make our roads pedestrian and bike-friendly. It is better for our communities and for motor vehicle safety. We must continue to develop freight rail, expand our ports and airports to reduce the truck volumes on our highways. We must make our transportation decisions based on preserving open space, cleaning up brownfields, and revitalizing communities. This and last's year's transportation initiatives start us down this path.

This newsletter details some of the legislation I worked on as well as other items/resources which may be of interest to you and your family. As always, please call me at my legislative office: 240-8585 or at home: 521-3554 if you have any questions, problems or concerns.

Sincerely,



20th Assembly District ★ West Hartford



## Roadmap for Connecticut's Economic Future

**PA 06-136** is the next step to upgrade Connecticut's transportation infrastructure through strategic investments to reduce congestion statewide, enhance transit, interconnectivity, and encourage economic growth.

Building on last year's initiative, the bill:

- provides a \$2.5 billion balanced, multimodal package that increases accountability in the transportation planning
- improves coordination and planning across state agencies
- fosters greater communication among our neighboring states to address regional freight and commuter mobility needs
- increases the importance of transportation planning as essential to our state's future through a revised Transportation Strategy Board plan which includes the prioritization of projects

The bill authorizes funding for a number of projects across the state including (not all inclusive):

- the New Haven to Hartford to Springfield commuter rail with a link to Bradley International Airport
- the New Britain to Hartford busway
- capital enhancements to the branch lines, the New Haven line, and Shoreline East to foster increased ridership on transit
- funds for the next steps towards expansion along I-95 east of Branford and I-84 west of Waterbury
- the use of Urban Act dollars for transit oriented development projects (such as the busway stops in West Hartford) a step towards improved coordination and planning between transit and economic growth by encouraging mixed use development around transit stations



## Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

With the opportunity to create jobs and spur economic growth, **PA 06-83** puts Connecticut at the forefront of the emerging digital media industry; improves the business climate; and increases Connecticut's competitiveness in today's global economy. This comprehensive economic development package offers a variety of tax incentives, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and enhances coordination of policies. It includes:



### Manufacturing Machinery & Equipment Property Tax Exemption

This law exempts all manufacturing machinery and equipment from local property taxes after a five year phase out and provides that towns will be reimbursed for any revenue loss. Long viewed as an impediment to growth, the end to the Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment Property Tax will help keep our manufacturers competitive. Connecticut was one of only a few states in U.S. to have had such a tax.

### Corporation Tax Surcharge

The 15% corporation tax surcharge for the 2007 tax year will be eliminated. The surcharge applies to all corporations, except for those owing the \$250 minimum tax. This was supposed to be a temporary surcharge when enacted in 2003. I pushed to keep this promise to Connecticut businesses and eliminate the surcharge.



## Social Security Offsets Under the Worker's Compensation System

The General Assembly took action this session to restore fairness to one of the most vulnerable groups in Connecticut: working people over the age of 65. Prior to passage of this legislation, injured senior employees eligible for workers' compensation had their Social Security retirement benefit deducted from the benefit. This offset was unjustly harmful to senior citizens who often are in the workplace because their Social Security benefits are insufficient to sustain a living. Because of this legislation, a senior citizen injured on the job is eligible for their full workers' compensation benefits rather than being penalized for having Social Security benefits. **PA 06-84**



## Clean Cars

To curb harmful greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from motor vehicles, this legislation, which I co-sponsored and pushed for, implements a GHG labeling program for new vehicles sold or leased for the 2009 model year and later. The Department of Environmental Protection commissioner must create a GHG labeling program, which will contain the GHG score comparing that vehicle's GHG emissions with those of other vehicle models of the same model year, the average GHG score within the same vehicle class, and any other relevant information as determined by DEP. Cars are rated on a scale of 0 to 10, whereby 10 represents the lowest amount of GHG emitted. The average GHG score for 2006 is 5. This measure is a part of the state's commitment to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. **PA 06-161**

## Autism Pilot Program

The State of Connecticut currently provides few support services for adults with autism. This legislation begins to change that. The new law requires the Department of Mental Retardation to establish an autism spectrum disorders pilot program. The program will provide services such as job skills, life skills coaching, and case management services for up to fifty autistic adults and their families. **PA 06-188**

## Imaging Services

This law, which I co-sponsored, limits the copayments that can be imposed on persons for all magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed axial tomography (CAT) scan, and positron emission tomography (PET) scan services performed in-network. Managed care companies were unfairly cost shifting to vulnerable patients. This bill limits the copayments for MRIs and CAT scans to no more than \$375 for all such services annually and \$75 for each one. It

limits the copayments for PET scans to no more than \$400 for all such scans annually and \$100 for each one. These copayment limits do not apply in some cases. **PA 06-180**

